

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing a printing service to a user according to a result of judgment as to whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on authentication information input from the user, the printing service method comprising the steps of:

asking a predetermined system about the authentication information if the authentication information is for the predetermined system; and

judging whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on affirmation or denial of the authentication information by the predetermined system.

2. A printing service method as defined in Claim 1, the step of asking further comprising the steps of:

receiving a name of the predetermined system at the time of receiving the authentication information; and

specifying the predetermined system based on the name and asking the predetermined system about the authentication information.

3. A printing service method as defined in Claim 1, the step of asking further comprising the steps of:

specifying the predetermined system based on the authentication information and asking the predetermined system about the authentication information.

4. A printing service method as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, further comprising the steps of:

generating charge information for the printing service in the case where the user has been judged to be eligible for the service and transferring the information to the predetermined system; and

5           charging the user for the service based on the charge information by using the predetermined system.

10           5. A printing service system for providing a printing service to a user according to a result of judgment as to whether or not the user is eligible for the printing service based on authentication information input from the user, the printing service system comprising:

15           authentication means for asking a predetermined system about the authentication information if the authentication information is for the predetermined system, and for judging whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on affirmation or denial of the authentication information by the predetermined system.

20           6. A printing service system as defined in Claim 5, the authentication means receiving an input of a name of the predetermined system at the time of receiving the authentication information, specifying the predetermined system based on the name of the predetermined system, and asking the predetermined system about the authentication information.

25           7. A printing service system as defined in Claim 5, wherein the authentication means specifies the predetermined

system based on the authentication information and asks the predetermined system about the authentication information.

8. A printing service system as defined in any one of Claims 5 to 7, the printing service system further comprising fee charging means for generating charge information for the printing service in the case where the user has been judged to be eligible for the service and for transferring the charge information to the predetermined system, wherein

the predetermined system charges the user for the service based on the charge information.

9. A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute a method of providing a printing service to a user according to a result of judgment as to whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on authentication information input from the user, the program comprising the procedures of:

asking a predetermined system about the authentication information if the authentication information is for the predetermined system; and

judging whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on affirmation or denial of the authentication information by the predetermined system.

10. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 9, the procedure of asking further comprising the procedures of:

receiving a name of the predetermined system at the time

of receiving the authentication information; and

specifying the predetermined system based on the name and asking the predetermined system about the authentication information.

5           11. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 9, the procedure of asking further comprising the procedures of:

specifying the predetermined system based on the authentication information and asking the predetermined system about the authentication information.

12. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in any one of Claims 9 to 11, the program further comprising the procedures of:

generating charge information for the printing service in the case where the user has been judged to be eligible for the service and transferring the charge information to the predetermined system.

13. A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute a printing service method for providing a printing service to a user according to a result of judgment as to whether or not the user is eligible for the service based on authentication information input from the user, the program comprising the procedure of:

charging the user for the printing service based on transferred charge information.